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**Re: Hiring Approval**

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**Shuckerow, Matt N (GOV)** <matt.shuckerow@alaska.gov>  
To: James Brooks <jbrooks@adn.com>

Wed, Mar 6, 2019 at 8:03 PM

James,

Thank you for your request. I apologize for the slow response, however I've been trying to track down some information for you regarding this matter. In addition to the emails I forwarded to you, I've included two Memorandum's (dated February 13 and February 27) regarding travel and hiring. I have also included a 2016 and 2017 hiring and travel memorandum from the previous administration. Can you please confirm that this fulfills your February 28<sup>th</sup> request for memos and documents on **"procedure that requires the governor's office to approve of certain exempt, partially exempt, or temporary exempt hires."**

As part of the Governor's efforts to identify efficiencies and cost savings across government, the Office of the Governor has instituted government-wide changes for travel and hiring. In the face of a massive \$1.6 billion deficit, and the governor's desire to match expenditures and revenues, these reforms include an important emphasis on how we fill vacancies. Collectively, these changes will better help determine whether positions are being effectively filled and/or if these positions are consistent with delivering high-priority programming and core services necessary to serve Alaskans.

More broadly speaking, Executive office involvement in these areas is consistent with previous Governors. For example, Governor Walker's office issued a variety of directives dictating policies regarding hiring and travel, some of which are very similar to steps currently being undertaken by this administration. I've included records that provide additional detail.

## **Travel**

As part of Governor Dunleavy's FY2020 proposed budget and associated policy directives – which instituted a 50% travel reductions across all departments (with certain, but limited exceptions) – guidance was issued that states the following:

- Travel should only occur when there is no alternative except to travel in order to achieve the agency's mission-critical work.
- In recognition that not all programs can cut travel in half and still accomplish their mission, departments may receive certain flexibility.
- Out-of-state and international travel is not permitted at this time. Exceptions may be made when an agency's ability to deliver high-priority programming – such as public safety, economic growth and development, federal compliance requirements – is jeopardized if the travel does not occur.

- All State Boards and Commissions must comply with these travel restricting, including to the extent feasible, and limiting travel to one meeting per year and conducting other Board Meetings telephonically and/or through video conferencing.

## **Recruitment and Hiring**

At the direction of the Governor and his Chief of Staff, a general restriction on hiring has been put into effect. This restriction applies to all positions, including: full-time; part-time; seasonal; and non-permanent. Departments may pursue a waiver when the position is required to deliver high-priority programming or core services and the position's work cannot be performed by reassignment or reprioritizing the functions of another employee.

- Hiring approval must be obtained in advance from OMB and the Chief of Staff for all particularly-exempt, exempt, and temporary-exempt positions Range 18 and above.
- Prior to seeking hire approval, Payroll Services must provide range and step for position.
- Additional justification and scrutiny is required for all salaries in excess of \$150,000, including a clear explanation of the position's impact on the agency's ability to deliver high-priority programming or core services.
- Expectation of hiring managers to practice proactive staff management by monitoring position workloads and activities to ensure the most effective resource management.

**As mentioned, some of these directives match policies instituted by previous administrations. For example:**

- "Travel should be limited to activities that cannot be conducted by any form of electronic communication." – Gov. Walker Directive (January 9, 2015)
- "Out of state travel will be scrutinized very carefully to ensure there is a significant public purpose for such a trip." – Gov. Walker directive (January 9, 2015)
- "All agencies are prohibited from incurring non-essential travel costs, including air travel, ground travel, lodging, parking, tolls and/or any other miscellaneous travel expenses." – Gov. Walker directive (January 5, 2016)
- "A general restriction on hiring is effective immediately. This applies to all positions, including part-time, except those that are necessary to protect the life, health and safety of Alaskans. – Walker directive (January 5, 2016)

- “Before an offer is made on any exempt or partially exempt position at or above Range 22, an agency must submit a hire request to the Chief of Staff, or his designee...” – Gov. Walker directive (January 6, 2017)
- “All salaries in excess of \$150,000 must provide adequate justification and will be thoroughly scrutinized.” – Gov. Walker directive (January 6, 2017)

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#### 4 attachments

-  **02.13.19 Travel and Hire Restrictions Memo.pdf**  
180K
-  **02.27.19 Exempt and Partially-Exempt Hiring Process Memo.pdf**  
60K
-  **Hiring Travel Restriction Jan 2017.pdf**  
102K
-  **Travel - Hiring memo 2016-01-05.pdf**  
161K